

Church of the Holy Spirit Faith Formation Program

September 6, 2019

Dear Families,

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our Faith Formation Program! My name is Ann Simonson and I am the Coordinator of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry. I am looking forward to working with you and your child! It is hard to believe that another summer has come to a close and the kids are back to school already. With that being said, it is also time to think about the beginning of our year of growing closer to God in our Faith Formation Programs here at our church.

Grades K-5 classes will begin on **Sunday, September 29th**. Class time is the same as last year; **Sunday mornings from 10:15 – 11:15 am** with Mass following at 11:30 am. The location is also the same, the school building, please access the building using the doors marked Spirit Central. I am asking **ALL** parents to stay on the first day of class for a **parent meeting** that will be held during your child's class time. We will go over information in this letter as well as some other important; helpful information and answer any questions you may have. I also invite **ALL** families to attend Mass together after this meeting for a special "Blessings of the Backpacks" that Fr. Matt will be offering. This blessing will remind your children that God is with them each and every day! Please send your child's backpack to class with them that first day so it may be blessed during Mass. Also, please remember that you are always welcome to relax in our Café while your child(ren) attend class each week. This is a great opportunity to get to know other parents and have some great discussions!

For students in **2nd grade**, receiving their **First Reconciliation** and **First Communion**; additional information and parent meetings are forth coming. Their class time will follow the Grades K-5 calendar; with additional dates for extra activities.

Grades 6-10 will meet on **Sunday evenings** same time, same location as last year. The school building, accessing through the doors marked Spirit Central. Class will begin on **Sunday, October 6th**; **with grades 6th-8th meeting from 7:15 to 8:15 pm and Grades 9th & 10th meeting from 7:15 to 8:15 pm** each week. Additional information and calendar will be forth coming. If you have a child in both evening programs; you may send them for the full 2 hours; supervision is provided, they may utilize the game room or the café.

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) will be offered again this year; taking place during the 11:30 am Mass. We are blessed to have our First Communion Catechists lead this instruction. The children are led into the Adoration Chapel after opening prayer and hear the same readings and Gospel at a child's level. This gives them the opportunity to ask and answer questions and have a better understanding of what takes place during the Mass. They re-join the rest of the congregation for the remainder of the Mass during the offertory. The children are offered an opportunity to bring forth the gifts. Please remember the Mass is an extremely important part of your child's faith formation as well as for your family's ongoing journey of faith. If you cannot attend Mass for any reason, your child may still come to Mass and sit with our First Communion Catechists or myself, with your permission, and you may pick them up after Mass at 12:30. We will be teaching your children the importance of attending Mass. You, as their parents, have the power to establish how important attending Mass is! Let's make it a priority and work together to fill the pews!

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Tithing. This year all classes will learn about the importance of tithing. They will learn that it is more than just giving the church money! It's about the Corporal Works of Mercy; giving back, taking care of; and investing in our parish community! Without this, we won't have a parish to call our own! Each classroom will have a jar and envelopes. This will be used to collect spare change. At dismissal each class period, your child will be able to take an envelope, take some spare change from the jar and bring the envelope to Mass with them to put it into the offertory. There will be a basket in the Adoration Chapel for the children who attend CLOW. Please help us keep the jars in your child(ren's) class rooms from becoming empty and send in your spare change each week. Your child will be reminded of the Gospel from Mark 12:41-44; The Widow's offering; it's not about the amount you give rather about the sacrifice and the giving itself.

Mom's Group. The Mom's Group (MOFIA; Mothers of Faith in Action) that was formed a few years ago has decided to move in a different direction to get more families involved. The group that is being formed now doesn't have an official name yet and is like that of a school PTA which allows for a broader range of volunteers. Their mission is the same and that is to continue to plan and host activities for families throughout the Faith Formation year and to fundraise for our Faith Formation Programs. This is a great example of Tithing mentioned above as well as bringing families together and truly becoming one as a Church Family. There is a meeting, **Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30 pm** in our Spirit Central Café. ALL are welcome to attend. Once the events are planned, a list of them will be mailed to you.

Registration. Enclosed you will find a registration form, a photo consent form, a calendar for the year and an envelope. There is no longer a set fee for registration for your child(ren) to attend Faith Formation however if you choose to do so there is a "free will" offering. You may send this envelope with your child to class; or place in the collection basket at any Mass throughout the Faith Formation year. Let God be your guide; this is an anonymous free will offering. The Registration and Consent Forms may be mailed to: The Faith Formation Program, Church of the Holy Spirit, 153 S. Main Street, Gloversville, NY, 12078 or sent with your child to the first day of class. The photo consent form needs to only be completed once and will be kept on file and may be changed at any time.

At the bottom of the registration form there is a place to indicate the best way to contact you. We use the Remind APP (text message or email notifications) and we find it extremely helpful to get a quick message out about weather cancellations or changes in the calendar or to remind you about an event. We also update our Parish website, www.holyspirit12078.org and put a status update out via our Facebook Page: Church of the Holy Spirit Faith Formation – like us and follow ups for those updates.

Our entire Faith Formation Team of volunteers is looking forward to working with you in leading you and your children into a deeper relationship with God.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime with questions or concerns: 518-773-8590 (office); 518-848-1986 (texting available) or via email at nosnomis3@yahoo.com.

Many blessings,

Ann Simonson

Coordinator of Faith Formation/Youth Ministry